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7 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments on IIM: The Readiness of Soviet Naval Forces

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1. I have a basic problem with this paper despite the fact that it has a lot of good material in it. You start on page 2 by defining readiness as a function of availability and of combat effectiveness. Combat effectiveness is then further defined in terms of crew proficiency, adequacy of materiel, quality of support, maintenance, sustainability, command, control, communications, and intelligence. Yet a goodly portion of the paper is devoted to tactics and how well the Soviet Navy would perform in a tactical environment. I must admit that I think the discussion in this regard is reasonable--page 13 onward--though rather brief and hence somewhat superficial. For instance, I believe if you are going to talk about the effectiveness of Soviet forces you need to distinguish between the surprise scenario in which the Soviets have the drop on us and start the war without notice and a situation in which we have adequate warning and are on a full war footing when hostilities begin.

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2. I think we are particularly out of our territory from page 18 onward when we talk about how well the Soviets can carry out various missions. The readiness factor is included in these discussions, but certainly a great deal more than that.

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3. With respect to discussion on readiness itself, I am somewhat disappointed that we have not really grappled seriously enough with the issue of personnel training and readiness. I would certainly like to see some comparative statistics of the Soviet Mediterranean squadron and the Sixth Fleet as to operating time, number of exercises, type of exercises,

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amount of live firing, etc. Among other things, I wonder if we even have adequate data on this. If we analyze everything we have in real detail

[REDACTED]

here. Either the Soviets are not ready or we are overexercising. With

[REDACTED]

From my point of view, that was the primary objective of this and I suspect was very much Secretary Brown's also. I am in favor of calling a halt and doing a major regrouping on this particular issue. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4. At the least, I would like to elaborate on the disagreement at the bottom of page 8. To begin with, let's ask those who profess there is high personnel readiness to amplify a little bit more on why the Soviets can be ready for "first salvo" operations without much training--that is, what are these "first salvo" operations and why can they be done so easily? I suspect what they are saying is that if you are lined up with your guns and missiles at short range pointed directly at the enemy and are allowed to pull the trigger first you have a reasonable chance of succeeding. If that is what they really mean, that's about like saying that an 80 year-old woman is well trained with a pistol as long as she is allowed to have her hand on the trigger, the barrel in your stomach, and with her choice of when to shoot. It's true. In this case it is important, but it is a very limited definition of readiness. Even the old woman without much practice may bungle the act by not pulling hard enough on the trigger the first time which will give you just enough time to knock the pistol out of your belly. Similarly, a coordinated attack by four or five ships on a Navy task force without someone either missing with the first shot or shooting prematurely is not easily done. Just the time in which you light off the fire control radars and lock on the target will be critical because it will begin to tip your hand to the US task force. [REDACTED]

5. I would also change the statement of the alternative view to something like the following:

"An alternative view is that a lack of adequate personnel training leads to a high incidence of personnel errors in the initial stages of combat execution. At least this is generally the experience in peacetime exercises, i.e., initial phases of an exercise are ragged until the crew settles down. Therefore, the lack of continual personnel readiness training, exacerbated by equipment deficiencies

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generated by a lack of use, leaves considerable doubt as to whether the Soviet Navy would be combat proficient in the early stages of combat." [REDACTED]

6. On page 11, I think there should be some mention made of the SSN and SSGN. We mention the SS. In my view, the SSN and SSGN must be ready for prolonged combat also. At least I can't see many reasons why they are not. This places into some question the initial sentence in the first paragraph of this page. [REDACTED]



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